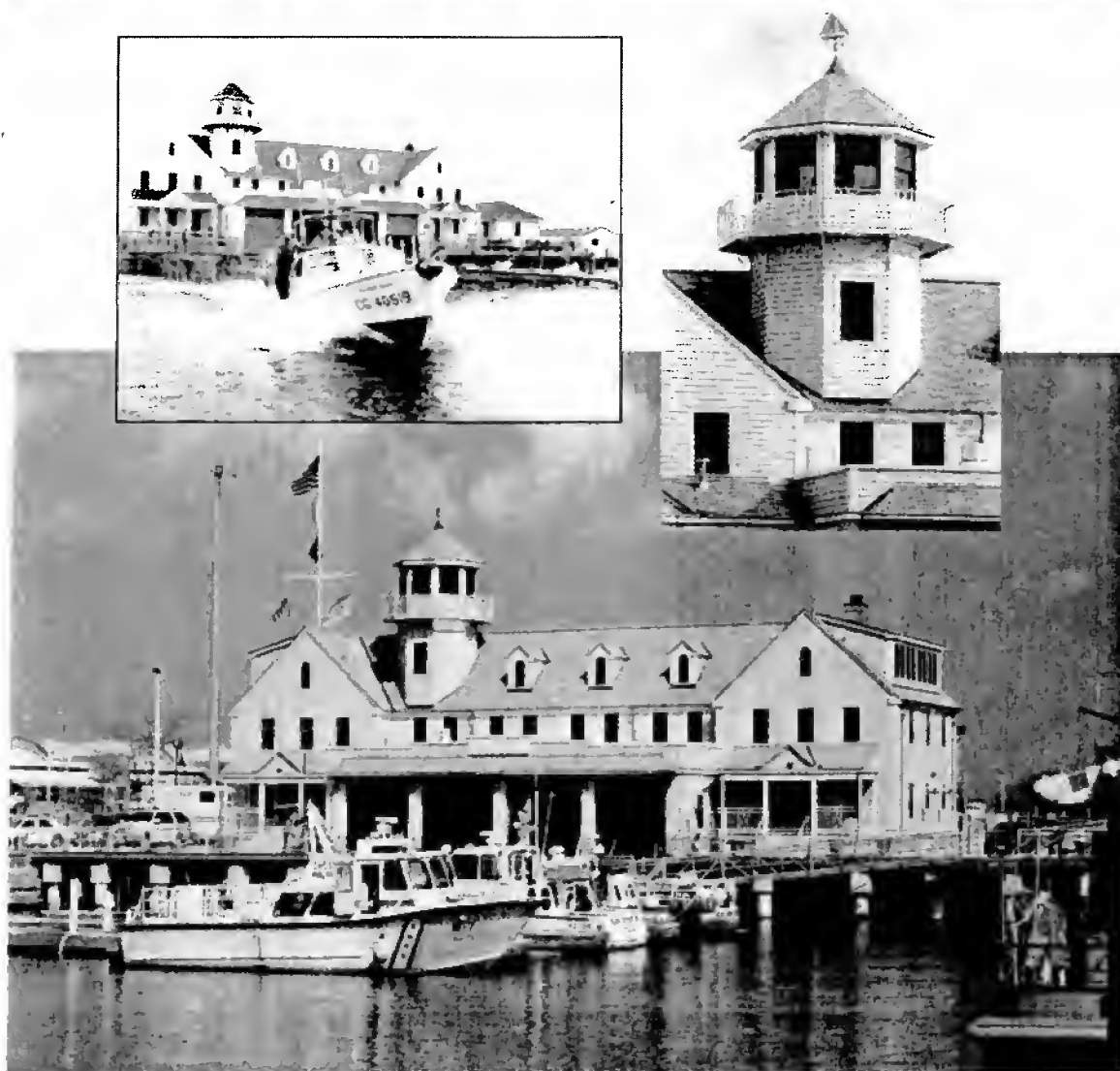


## LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



# Old Chicago Coast Guard Station

Lake Michigan at the mouth of the Chicago River

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission  
on Chicago Landmarks, April 5, 2007



CITY OF CHICAGO  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

# Old Chicago Coast Guard Station

(now Chicago Marine Safety Station)

Lake Michigan near the mouth of the Chicago River

**Date:** 1936

**Architect:** Civil Engineers Office,  
United States Coast Guard

Perched on the southwestern edge of Lake Michigan, Chicago is a marine city set in the interior of the North American continent. Its unique geography, at the nexus between the Great Lakes basin and the Mississippi River watershed, made the City's existence in the mid-nineteenth century inevitable. In an era before railroad transportation, water transport was the easiest and most efficient means to ship both people and goods from one place to another. Chicago's geographic location, although outwardly flat and unprepossessing, was inspired, with its short, roughly six-mile portage between the Chicago River, which drained into Lake Michigan, and the DesPlaines River, a tributary of the Mississippi River. Chicago became the "commercial hinge" that connected world-wide sea trade (through the Great Lakes, the newly-constructed Erie Canal, and New York City harbor) to the American heartland by way of the grandly-scaled Mississippi River and its thousands of miles of tributaries.

The historic structures that tell the history of Chicago's historic connections to water-based traffic, both commercial and recreational, are relatively few. (The Chicago Harbor Lighthouse and Navy Pier, both designated Chicago Landmarks, are two.) The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station exemplifies an important aspect of the City's maritime history the ongoing need to have marine rescue squads ready and available to render aid and assistance to endangered ship crews and passengers in the event of ship disaster on Lake Michigan and the Chicago River. During its approximately 70-year history since its

*The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.*

*The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.*

*This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.*

construction in 1936, the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station has housed rescue crews that have rendered life-saving assistance to countless boaters and sailors.

The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is the latest of several buildings built at the mouth of the Chicago River that housed crews dedicated to the aid and rescue of ship crews and passengers. An earlier life-safety station on the current building's site housed the crew who assisted in the rescue of dozens of passengers on the ill-fated Eastlake excursion boat, which capsized on the Chicago River in 1915 with the loss of hundreds of lives. More typically, the crews that manned both the earlier and existing Coast Guard station buildings strove to serve and protect countless ship crews and passengers under siege by violent weather and mechanical failure in Lake Michigan throughout the twentieth century.

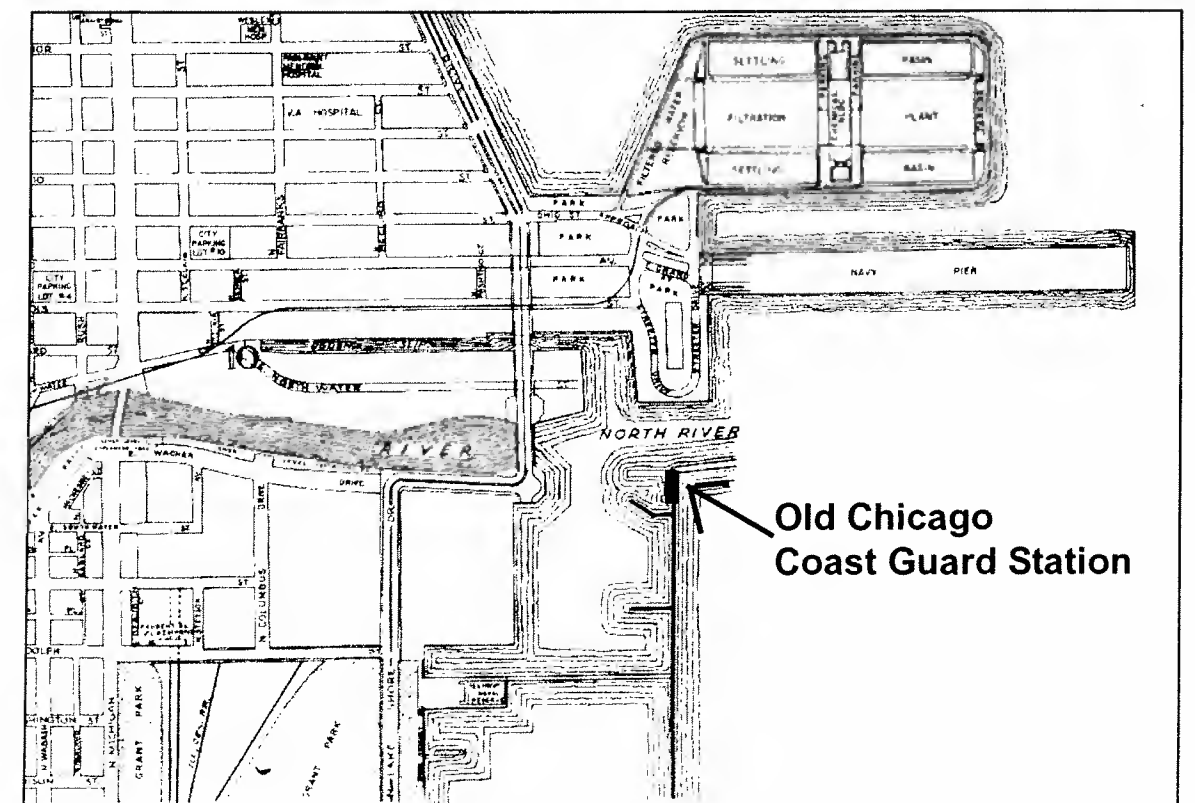
The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station was designed and built as a structure in the long-standing tradition of American maritime structures, especially those built along the Atlantic coastline of New England and the Mid-Atlantic states of New York and New Jersey. The building's simple, horizontal and triangular forms, accented by a modest vertical tower, all clad with wood shingles, relates both to age-old vernacular seaside architecture and the more modern tradition of such structures for Coast Guard station buildings. It also is associated with the more self-conscious 19<sup>th</sup>-century Shingle Style architecture of resort and suburban architecture that used simple geometric forms (squares, rectangles, and cylinders) clad with wood shingles as the basis for an informal-looking architecture associated with historic American Colonial architecture. This simple wood-frame architecture clad with shingles continued through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to influence so-called "Cape Cod" houses, part of the larger Colonial Revival architectural movement.

Situated on a breakwater defining the Chicago River Turning Basin, next to the Chicago River locks, the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is highly visible from multiple vantage points, including Navy Pier to the north and Monroe Harbor to the south; the station is a distinctive visual "landmark" for Chicagoans. Having recently undergone rehabilitation by the City of Chicago, the building is used by multiple City, State, and Federal agencies involved in marine rescue, and it remains one of Chicago's most visually distinctive lakefront structures.

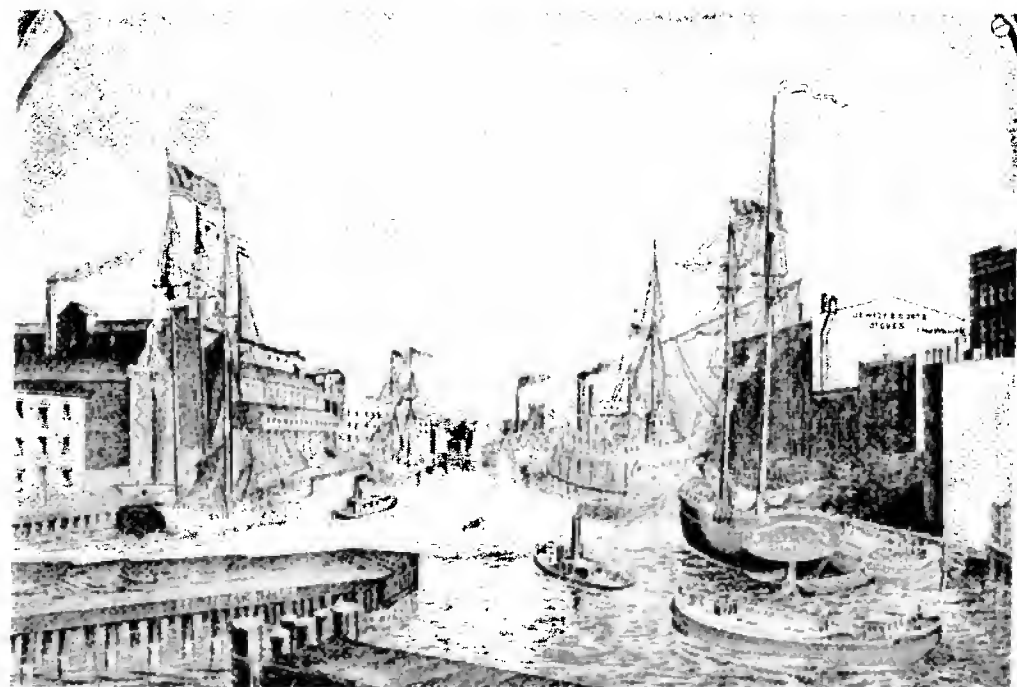
## CHICAGO'S EARLY MARITIME HISTORY

Despite its location in the heart of the North American continent, Chicago has always been a maritime metropolis. The city's location on Lake Michigan guaranteed that boats of all types, from large-scale commercial ships to small-scale pleasure craft, would ply the lake waters to and from the City.

Exploration and mapping of the region centered on present-day Chicago began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as French voyageurs opened trade networks with Native Americans in what would become the northern Illinois-southern Wisconsin region. Travel through the Great



Top: The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station was built in 1936. Bottom: The building is located east of N. Lake Shore Dr. and is built on a breakwater that is part of the Chicago River Turning Basin.



Throughout its history, Chicago has been an active maritime city. Top: An aerial lithograph published in *Harper's Weekly* in 1871. Bottom: A drawing of the Chicago River in the 1880s.

Lakes increased over the late 1700s and the early 1800s as trade networks moved westward.

Most important to the growth and development of Chicago as a gateway for maritime trade activities was the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848. Together, these waterways created an inland shipping transportation network that connected the Atlantic Seaboard with the Great Lakes and Mississippi River south to New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. The result was a tremendous boom in the shipping industry on the Great Lakes and the founding of Chicago in the early 1830s, which provided a natural harbor within the Chicago River for ship-born trade.

Early on, the new Chicago settlement's maritime traffic received attention from the federal government through the construction of the harbor's first lighthouse, or "light" as they are commonly called, on the banks of the Chicago River. (The current Chicago Harbor Lighthouse, located southeast of the easternmost tip of Navy Pier, is a designated Chicago Landmark.) Unfortunately, larger vessels could not reach the harbor entrance, since most were blocked from safe anchorage by a sand bar. As a result of the harbor's position at the foot of the lake, wave action driven by northeast winds would drive sand into the southern shore, keeping the waters shallow at the river's entrance. Schooners and large vessels anchored off shore, often as far as a mile away, and ferried their cargos and passengers ashore in small boats. Responding to this problem, the Federal Government appropriated \$25,000 for improvements to the harbor in 1833. Over six years, a channel was dredged from the deep lake water to the mouth of the Chicago River, and piers flanking the channel were constructed so that the river was opened to large vessels laden with cargo.

Shipping traffic on Lake Michigan greatly expanded during the late 1830s, and by the time of the city's incorporation in 1836, Chicago had grown to be the Great Lakes' largest and most important port, thanks to the aforementioned harbor improvements. Digging of the Illinois & Michigan Canal began in 1836, but the waterway that linked the Mississippi River (and by extension the vastness of the western American prairie) with the Great Lakes was not completed until 1848. With the completion of the I & M Canal, millions of tons of corn, wheat, and lumber from western states and territories would pass through Chicago to the Great Lakes and on to the northeast and Europe. Inbound vessels brought new immigrants and supplies needed to build the rapidly expanding town. Providing an easy portage to the expanding network of interconnected waterways, Chicago's harbor, along with its growing status as a major hub of railroads, played a significant role in the subsequent development of the interior of the United States.

Passenger traffic in the mid-nineteenth century also grew as a result of the network of waterways. As the interior of the country was settled and the demand for travel increased, the people of means began seeking transport on sailing vessels and later, steamships. By 1847 the maritime industry was boasting that travel time from Buffalo to Chicago, using a combination of railroad and ship, could be accomplished in three days (less than half the



time the trip would have taken by steamship just five years before). In the years that followed, railroads took most of the passenger traffic away from the Great Lakes steamers and canals, but maritime shipping continued to thrive.

Chicago was the leader of Great Lakes trade in general, which had grown by the Civil War to \$600,000,000 in value annually. As the 1870s dawned, Chicago's port vied with New York City and San Francisco as the busiest harbor in the country. This growth continued over the next decade, and by 1888 the Port of Chicago had 20,000 arrivals and departures of major vessels in its eight-month shipping season compared to New York's 23,000 over an entire 12-month season.

Chicago's port continued to attract millions of tons of commerce annually, and by 1910, the City and federal government determined that harbor improvements would be undertaken. In 1916, Municipal Pier, today known as Navy Pier, was opened to handle both passenger and freight traffic. Additional improvements, completed in 1917, included the construction of a concrete superstructure for a water crib, which stood 2,300 feet from the outer end of Navy Pier, and the extension of the exterior breakwater.

## CHICAGO AND THE HISTORY OF MARINE RESCUE

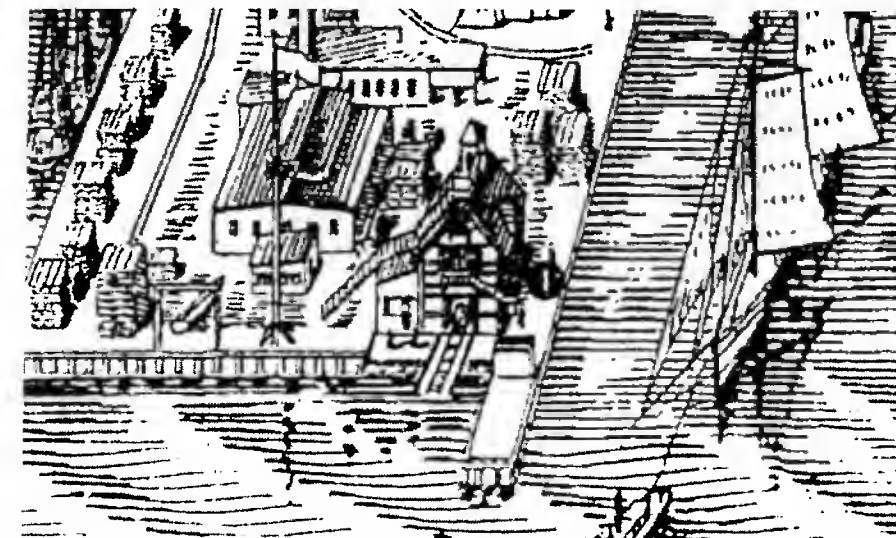
All of this maritime traffic through Chicago during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries meant that mishaps, both man- and nature-caused, would occur, and that there would need to be marine live-saving squads in place. In the spring of 1856, after many early maritime accidents, a single lifeboat with crew was assigned to Chicago harbor. Placed under the command of the Chicago Harbor Engineer, the life-saving crew operated as a group of volunteers, much in the tradition of volunteer firemen in small communities. The lifeboat was moored under the Rush Street Bridge (since replaced by the Michigan Avenue Bridge) for years until the first marine lifeboat station was built by the United States Life Saving Service (USLSS) in 1876 (some reports indicate 1877) on Illinois Central Railroad-owned land, at the railroad's Pier # 1, on the south side of the Chicago River east of present-day Michigan Avenue.

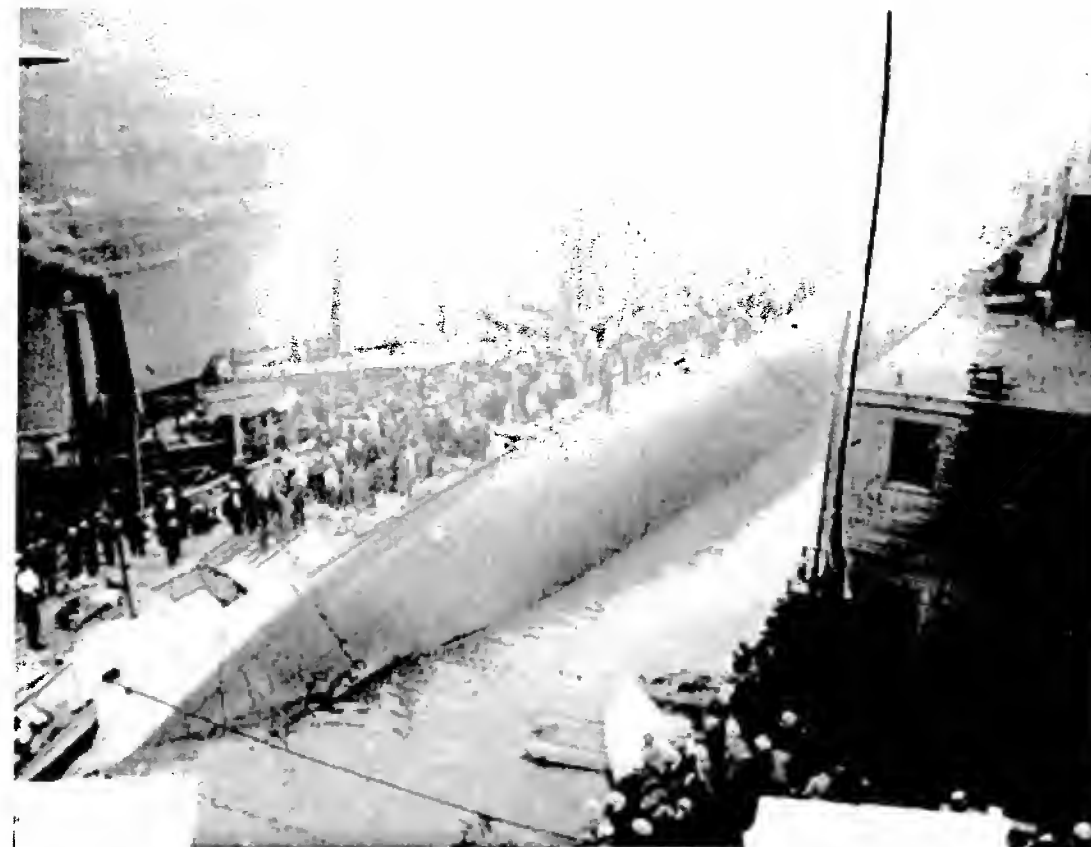
During the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, Chicago's marine safety station was moved to Jackson Park harbor as part of the world's fair. However, after a storm in 1894 caused the loss of multiple lives on boats foundering near the mouth of the Chicago River, the need for a permanent live-saving station off the shore of downtown Chicago was seen as essential, and a life-saving boat squad returned to Chicago harbor.

In 1903, a new Chicago Marine Life-Safety Station was opened adjacent to the mouth of the Chicago River. (This was after the mammoth effort to change the flow of the Chicago River away from Lake Michigan for health reasons, accomplished through the creation of Chicago River locks and an associated turning basin for ships, all enclosed by breakwaters.) The new Life-Safety Station was built on the turning basin's southern



The first permanent marine life-saving station in Chicago harbor was built in either 1876 or 1877 at the then-mouth of the Chicago River. Left: An engraving of the Chicago River, showing this life-saving station (arrow). Bottom: A closeup of the station.





In 1903, a new Chicago Marine Life-Safety Station was built on a breakwater in Chicago Harbor (approximately the same location as the present-day Coast Guard Station). Top: The building (demolished 1935) was a fine example of the Shingle Style of architecture. Middle left: A Coast Guard officer with binoculars in 1926. Middle right: A 1915 crew with their boat in dry dock. Bottom: Lake Michigan was frozen solid in this 1926 photo of the station, taken from the south-east and with the Chicago Tribune Tower in the far-left background.



The marine life-safety station had just come under the aegis of the United States Coast Guard when its crew participated in rescue operations for Chicago's worst marine disaster in its history - the overturning of the excursion boat *Eastlake* in the Chicago River on July 24, 1915, which took the lives of 844 people gathered for a Western Electric Co. outing. Top: A *Chicago Daily News* photo of the overturned boat. Bottom: A Coast Guard rescue boat.

breakwater, which connects to the mainland roughly where Randolph Street ends. The 1903 building was a wood shingle-clad building with a sweeping gable roof dominating the building's overall form, punctuated by a short tower providing a vertical counterpoint. The building, in its overall simplicity and use of shingle-cladding, harkened back to generations of shoreline buildings built throughout New England and Middle Atlantic states; while also resembling fashionable Shingle-Style resort architecture of the 1880s.

In 1915, the Life-Safety Station in Chicago Harbor came under the control of the newly established United States Coast Guard, which resulted from a merger of the USLSS and the United States Revenue Cutter System. It was at this time, according to some accounts, that the name "Old Chicago Coast Guard Station" was given to the building. It was also this year when the station's rescue crews were put to a great test responding to what remains Chicago's premier marine disaster, the capsizing of the excursion steamer *Eastlake* in the Chicago River after taking on a greater-than-capacity crowd of Western Electric Company employees on a weekend excursion. The disaster on July 24, 1915, resulted in the loss of 844 lives. A crew from the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is credited with saving 280 passengers.

By June 1935, the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station was credited with saving at least 6,000 lives from a variety of maritime mishaps, large and small. This figure came despite the existing Coast Guard Station building being devastated by fire in 1933. The building was repaired and put back into service briefly, but plans for a replacement building came to fruition in 1936, when the existing building was razed and a new Coast Guard Station constructed on the site. Completed at a cost of roughly \$99,480 received from the federal Works Progress Administration, and designed internally by civil engineers employed by the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, office of the United States Coast Guard, the new station building resembled the razed building with its simple gable-roofed structure clad with wood shingles and accented by a low tower.

The new Old Chicago Coast Guard Station (as it continued to be known) continued to be the headquarters of Coast Guard rescue operations along the Chicago lakefront until 1968, when it was closed and declared surplus property by the federal government in 1971. The number of commercial ships, which had been the primary goal of federal protection, had greatly diminished in number in the post-World War II years. In addition, helicopter-equipped rescue teams were increasingly handling larger numbers of lake rescues.

The City of Chicago acquired the building in 1971 for \$800, and it was used afterwards for a variety of functions, including the housing of the City of Chicago Police Department Marine Unit assisting ever-increasing numbers of recreational Lake Michigan boaters. The building has been rehabilitated by the City of Chicago and serves, since its reopening in 2005, as the Chicago Marine Safety Station. The building houses the City of Chicago Police Department Marine Unit, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Police, and United States Coast Guard personnel.



**Top: The prior Old Chicago Coast Guard Station (as it had become known) was badly damaged by fire in 1933. It was repaired and put back into service, but was then replaced by the current building in 1936. Bottom: The new station soon after its completion.**



## BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station (now known as the Chicago Marine Safety Station) is a wood-frame building, vernacular in its overall simplicity of form and ornament. Clad with wood shingles, it exemplifies the tradition of simple, vernacular-influenced design for life-saving stations operated by the United States Coast Guard. More generally, the building reflects a centuries-old tradition of shingle-clad, wood-frame buildings in seaside communities throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic states of New York and New Jersey. Such frame construction took advantage of readily abundant wood that was largely resistant to the corrosive tendencies of sea salt born on ocean winds. (Indeed, such salt-infused air created a gray patina on wood shingles that came to be much admired by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.)

The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station sits off the Chicago shoreline atop a manmade breakwater that forms part of the containment of the Chicago River Turning Basin (located next to the locks that separate the river from Lake Michigan). The breakwater extends east and north from the foot of Randolph Street (where it meets the lakefront), and the Coast Guard Station building sits close to the breakwater's northern end.

The building is roughly symmetrical, with a central, side-gable-roofed central section flanked by front-gable-roofed end pavilions. Small porches shelter doors to both end pavilions on both the west and east elevations. At the center on the building's west elevation is a four-door boat bay projecting from the west elevation. A small set of "finger" piers extend outward in front of these boat bays to provide docking for a variety of boats. A vehicular garage with doors extending from the building's east elevation serves as a visual counterpoint to the boat bays. Small gable dormers pierce the central section's roofline, while larger shed dormers (added in the recent renovation) are found on the end pavilions.

The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station's forms are crisp and geometric in overall form, reflecting the building's associations with generations of vernacular seaside buildings in general, and maritime buildings, including other life-saving stations, in particular. Closely-placed, square-cut wood shingles painted pale blue form a building "skin" that visually emphasizes volume rather than mass. Simple cream-colored wooden trim boards outline the building's edges, windows, and eaves. Applied ornament is de-emphasized in favor of building form, although simple keystones decorate third-floor round-arched windows. Visual interest lies in the massing and variety of building forms, including the twin front gables that flank the horizontal row of boat-bay doors and the vertical counterpoint of a low polygonal tower with an observation room set beneath a conical roof. (This tower, topped by a copper weathervane in the form of a sailing ship, brings to mind the traditional form of lighthouses, a visually and emotionally resonant maritime form.)



The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is a wood-frame building covered in shingles and edged in wood trim boards. Top: Its west elevation is visually dominated by four boat-bay doors, which are flanked by front-gable-roofed end pavilions, and resembles (in its simplicity) small-scale seaside buildings in New England. Bottom: The east elevation of the station, accessible via N. Breakwater Access Dr. atop the harbor breakwater, is similar in its overall vernacular character. (The shed dormers at each end of the building were added in the rehabilitation completed in 2005.)





Top left: The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station's overall horizontality is punctuated by a vertical watch tower. Top right: The end pavilions have simple shed roofs with small pediments. Bottom: The east elevation is dominated by projecting garage bays.

In this simple, vernacular use of wood-frame construction, shingle cladding, and lack of applied ornament, the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is similar to other Coast Guard Station buildings, including the Barnegat Lifesaving Station in Barnegat, New Jersey, among others. In the context of Chicago architecture, it is almost unique. Only the former Jackson Park Coast Guard Station, built in 1906 and located on the western edge of the boat harbor in Jackson Park on Chicago's South-side lakefront, is comparable, and arguably, the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is a more visually striking building in terms of its setting, majestically placed near the mouth of the Chicago River.

## SEASIDE "CAPE COD" ARCHITECTURE AND THE SHINGLE STYLE

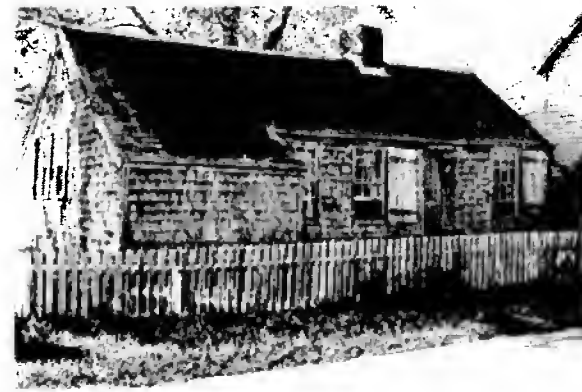
The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station exemplifies a long tradition of United States maritime architecture common on the East Coast and throughout the Great Lakes region, but rare in Chicago itself. It is associated with the vernacular traditions of wooden seaside architecture (often called "Cape Cod architecture" for its historic associations with this Massachusetts fishing and resort area) developed over generations in New England and Mid-Atlantic states. This vernacular architecture inspired United States Coast Guard architecture during the early 1900s, including the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station. It also is connected with the popularization of such architecture through 19<sup>th</sup>-century Shingle-Style buildings and later "Cape Cod" houses built as part of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Colonial Revival architectural movement.

"Cape Cod" architecture is visually simple and direct. Typically, wood building frames are covered by wood shingles or clapboards. Multi-paned windows pierce these simply-detailed building "skins" with little decoration or visual pretense. Porches are straightforward with simple wooden posts or columns supporting modest shed or gable roofs. The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is a 1930s building that uses these "Cape Cod" seaside architectural forms.

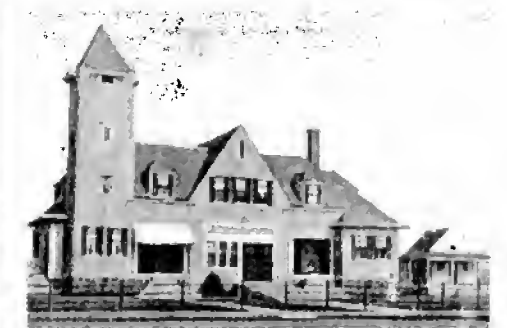
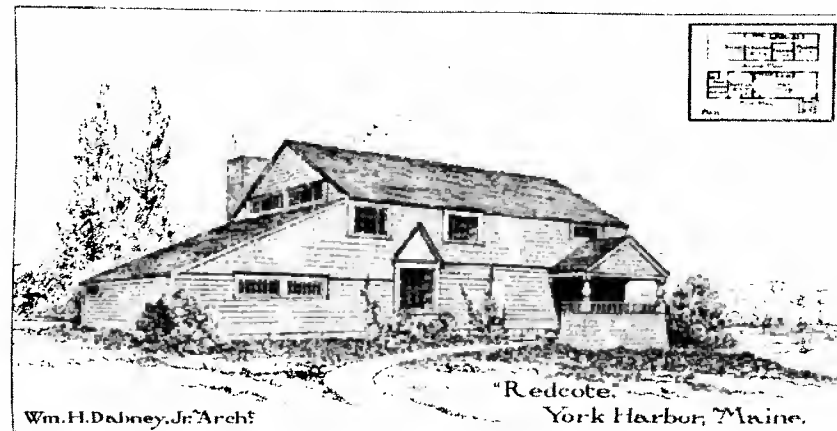
The United States Coast Guard, after its formation in 1915, took over a variety of marine life-saving stations scattered along the nation's coast lines. Many of these existing buildings were utilitarian structures built in the long-standing traditions of seaside architecture, fitting in their settings with their simple forms and wood construction. The Coast Guard consciously followed this tradition in later buildings, including the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station.

Also an influence was the increasing popularity of historic New England maritime architecture. The Shingle Style was started in New England by architects designing resort and suburban houses for well-to-do clients. The period's fondness for wood-shingled architecture arose out of a post-Centennial interest in colonial American architecture, both high-style and vernacular. The shingle architecture of seacoast towns, which were becoming newly fashionable as resorts in the 1870s and 1880s, was especially admired,

The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station exemplifies a vernacular tradition of wood-frame buildings, clad with wood shingles, traditionally found in seaside towns and villages in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states of New York and New Jersey. Right: A very early example of this tradition is this fisherman's house in Siasconset, Nantucket Island (off the coast of Massachusetts), built in 1673.

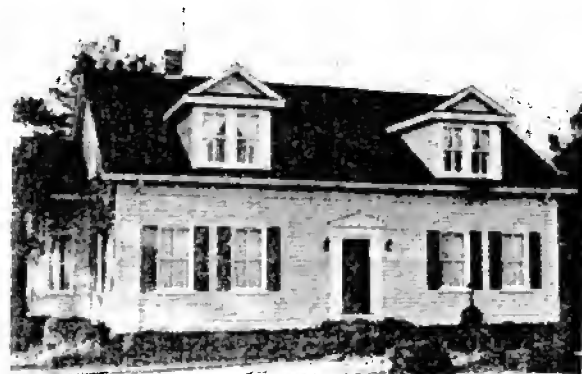


In the 1880s and 1890s, the Shingle architectural style was derived from colonial and vernacular shingle-clad buildings and was used first for fashionable summer houses. Two examples include: (middle top) "Grasshead House" in Swampscott, Massachusetts, and (middle bottom) "Redcote" in York Harbor, Maine, both designed in 1882.



The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is similar to many marine life-safety stations throughout the United States in its use of vernacular Shingle-Style forms, building materials, and details. Other similar stations include those at (clockwise from bottom left): Little Kinnakeet, North Carolina; Chicamacomico, North Carolina; Barnaget, New Jersey; Manasquan, New Jersey; and Nahant, Massachusetts.

This vernacular New England style was later reborn as so-called "Cape Cod" cottages and houses, built as part of the larger Colonial Revival architectural movement of the twentieth century. Right: A Cape Cod cottage in Greeleyville, North Carolina, c. 1910



and architects such as McKim, Mead & White designed a variety of chic Shingle-Style houses, hotels, and entertainment-related buildings during the style's heyday of the 1880s.

In general, Shingle-Style buildings are simple in overall form and ornamentation. Shingles provide a visually taut building "skin" over wood building frames, pierced by simply-detailed windows and doors. Rooflines were simple as well, with gable and hip roofs accented by dormers and the occasional tower. This visual simplicity, even austerity, befitted a style arising from small-town New England precedents and used most often for summer houses meant for casual living.

Arising in the wake of the Shingle Style was the Colonial Revival movement, which used as its base of reference all aspects of colonial American architecture, including the architecture of the colonial South and Pennsylvania as well as New England. The buildings of New England seafront towns remained a popular influence on this architectural movement, which was popular throughout much of the twentieth century and arguably remains a major force on residential architecture today. "Cape Cod" houses and cottages based on oceanfront buildings became a staple of American residential streetscapes in the years before and after World War II.

## CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a final recommendation of landmark designation to City Council for a building, structure, object or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

### ***Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History***

*Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.*

- The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station exemplifies the long maritime history of Chicago as a major center of Great Lakes commercial shipping and recreational boating.
- The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station reflects the history of marine life-safety and rescue in the history of Chicago, including the role of Old Chicago crews in countless rescues of passengers, including the capsizing of the passenger boat *Eastlake* in 1915, the worst maritime disaster in Chicago history.



Top: An aerial view of the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station taken from a seaplane (photo circa 1950s)

Bottom: The building in 1959.



#### ***Criterion 4: Important Architecture***

*Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.*

- The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is a visually unusual and rare Chicago building in a maritime architecture tradition tracing its roots to vernacular seaside buildings in New England.
- The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station exhibits a picturesque overall architectural style and craftsmanship that reflects the influences of historic Coast Guard architectural traditions, the Shingle Style of architecture, and the later “Cape Cod” buildings of the Colonial Revival architectural style.

#### ***Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature***

*Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.*

- The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station has a unique location in its placement on a breakwater at the mouth of the Chicago River.
- The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is a familiar visual feature for thousands of travelers on Lake Shore Drive, visitors to neighboring Navy Pier, and boaters and other excursionists traveling through the Chicago River locks, adjacent to the station.

#### ***Integrity Criteria***

*The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.*

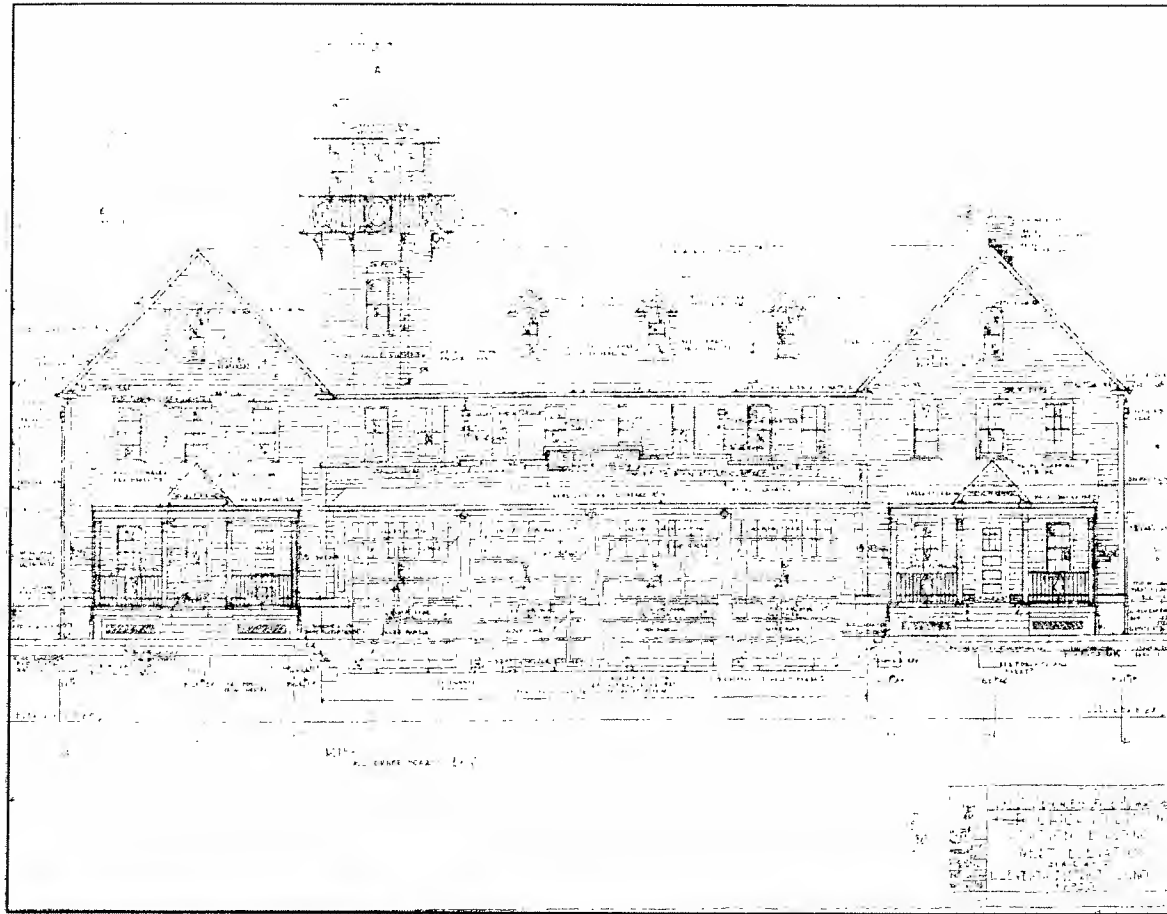
The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station possesses excellent exterior physical integrity, displaying through its siting, scale and overall design its historic relationship to the Chicago River Turning Harbor and the surrounding area. It retains its historic overall exterior form and almost all exterior materials and detailing.

The building underwent an extensive rehabilitation that was completed in 2005. As part of the rehabilitation, the exterior of the building was restored, while interiors were rebuilt with modern amenities. Boat-bay doors were replaced with visually similar doors, while analysis determined historically correct paint colors. The most visually noticeable exterior change to the building itself was the addition of shed dormers to the building's end pavilions to provide additional usable third-floor interior space. In addition, a new set of boat docking bays was placed in front of the boat-bay doors, creating an expanded number of outdoor boat docks.



The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station retains excellent physical integrity. Top: A photo from 1936. Bottom: A photo from 2005. The main change to the building is the addition of shed dormers atop each end pavilion and the construction of a multi-boat dock in front of the building.





Top: An architectural drawing for the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station from 1936.

Bottom: A view of the Coast Guard Station and the Chicago skyline from the east..

## SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the “significant historical and architectural features” of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered the most important to preserve the historic and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

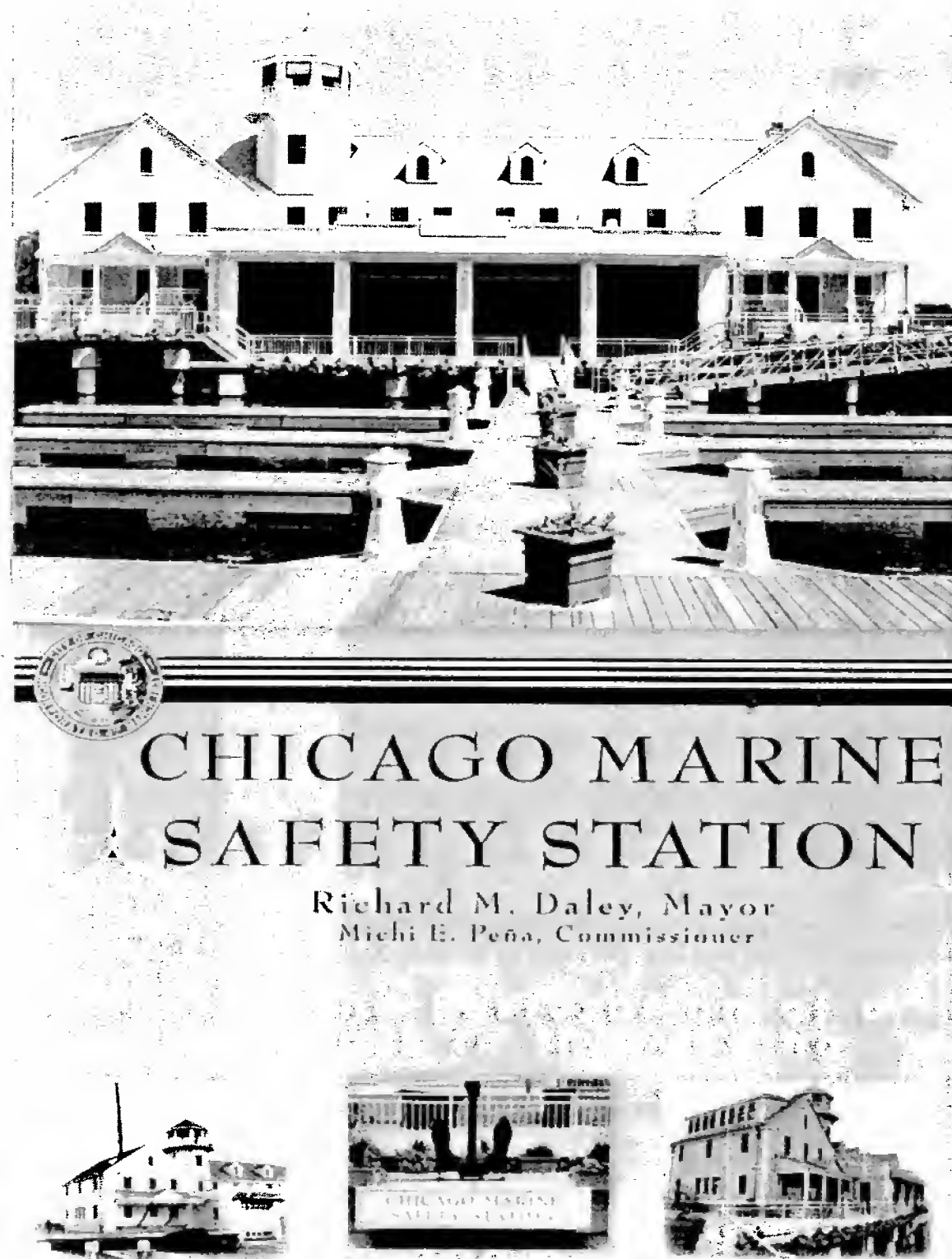
Based on its preliminary evaluation of the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building.

The breakwater upon which the Old Chicago Coast Guard Station is located is not considered a significant historical and architectural feature for the purpose of this Chicago Landmark designation.

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The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station reopened as the Chicago Marine Safety Station in 2005 after a rehabilitation by the City of Chicago. The building now houses the City of Chicago Police Department Marine Unit, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Police, and United States Coast Guard personnel.

## Acknowledgements

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### Illustrations

Department of Planning and Development, Landmarks Division: pp. 3 (top),

From Young, *Chicago Maritime: An Illustrated History*: p. 4.

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